



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2012

No. 31

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 28, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

AFRICAN AMERICAN INVENTORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, one of the few important accomplishments of the 112th Congress thus far has been the passage of the America Invents Act, a comprehensive reform of the United States patent system which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on September 16, 2011. There's little disagreement that patent reform was long overdue, and even those who voted against the bill recognized how impor-

tant it was to the American inventor and to American innovation to update and streamline the patent system.

Our country has always respected and admired inventors. As young children, we were taught about famous inventors such as Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford, and many others. Frequently overlooked in the discussion of important inventors, however, have been the accomplishments of African American inventors. Until this year's publication of the children's book, "What Color is My World? The Lost History of African-American Inventors" by basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, we've done little to teach children about the outstanding contributions African American inventors have made to innovation.

I therefore would like to use this time during Black History Month to pay tribute to some of the many, many contributions African American inventors have made. I'm not the first Member of this body to take to the floor of the House to acknowledge the long legacy of inventiveness in the African American community. On August 10, 1894, Representative George Washington Murray, the only African American in the House of Representatives at the time and himself the holder of eight patents on agricultural implements, read the names of 92 African Americans who held patents and described the inventions on the House floor.

Had time allowed, Representative Murray would likely have highlighted the achievements of even more patent holders—inventors such as Thomas L. Jennings, a free person of color and one of the earliest African Americans to patent an invention, who in 1821 was awarded a patent for developing an early drycleaning process to remove dirt and grease from clothing. Or James Forten, another freeborn man who invented a contraption to handle

the sails on a sailboat. Or Judy W. Reed, the first known woman of color to receive a patent, who created an improved dough kneader and roller. Or Henry Blair, an inventor who received utility patents on a seed and cotton planter.

If Representative Murray had continued to be a Member of Congress, he would, no doubt, have come to the floor of the House many more times to brag about African American inventors and to acknowledge the major significance of their inventions. He would have reported that by the year 1900, African Americans had patented 357 inventions. And I'm certain that he would have been especially moved to share with this body that by the early to mid-20th century, African American inventors had obtained patents for innovations in countless industries, including medical, chemical, aviation, automotive, grocery, cosmetic, and apparel.

For example, Garrett Morgan invented the gas mask to protect firemen and other rescuers from breathing smoke and poisonous gas when entering dangerous fires and other situations, and he was also awarded a patent for the three-way electric traffic signal. Charles Drew created a method to mass-produce blood plasma, which led to the formation of blood banks to store plasma for victims of life-threatening emergencies. Unfortunately, he bled to death following an automobile accident which occurred in my native State of North Carolina, and his injuries were too severe for the process he invented to be used to save his life.

Frederick McKinley Jones was the first African American member of the American Society of Refrigeration Engineers. He developed a means to refrigerate perishables being transported long distances. Jack Johnson, who was best known as the great African American boxer, received two patents: one for an improvement to the monkey wrench and the other for a theft prevention device for vehicles. I suspect

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H969

that my good friend and our colleague Representative DARRELL ISSA might be surprised to learn that Jack Johnson, an African American inventor, developed a device to prevent people from stealing cars long before Representative ISSA got into the business.

I encourage my colleagues to look at the books on African American invention.

Mr. Speaker, one of the few important accomplishments of the 111th Congress thus far has been the passage of H.R. 1249, the "America Invents Act," a comprehensive reform of the United States patent system which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on September 16, 2011. H.R. 1249 authorized the transition from a first-to-invent process to a first-to-file process for obtaining a patent, expanded the prior user rights defense and addressed to some extent (although not to my satisfaction) the diversion of fees collected by the Patent and Trademark Office to the general fund. There is little disagreement that patent reform was long overdue and even those who voted against H.R. 1249 recognized how important it was to the American inventor and to American innovation to update and streamline the patent system.

Our country has always respected and admired inventors. As young children we were taught about famous inventors such as Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford and many others. Frequently overlooked in discussions of important inventors, however, have been the accomplishments of African-American inventors. Until this year's publication of the children's book, *What Color is My World?: The Lost History of African American Inventors*, by basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, we've done little to teach children about the outstanding contributions African-American inventors have made to innovation. I would, therefore, like to use this time during Black History Month to pay tribute to some of the many, many contributions African-American inventors have made.

I am not the first member of this body to take to the floor of this House to acknowledge the long legacy of inventiveness in the African-American community. On August 10, 1894, Rep. George Washington Murray, the only African-American in the House of Representatives at that time and himself the holder of eight patents on agricultural implements, read the names of ninety-two African-Americans who held patents and described their inventions on the House floor. Had time allowed, Rep. Murray would likely have highlighted the achievements of even more patent holders, inventors such as: Thomas L. Jennings (1791–1859), a free person of color and one of the earliest African-Americans to patent an invention, who in 1821 was awarded a patent for developing an early dry-cleaning process to remove dirt and grease from clothing; James Forten, another free born man who invented a contraption to handle the sails on a sail boat; Judy W. Reed (the first known woman of color to receive a patent), who created an improved dough kneader and roller; and Henry Blair, an inventor who received utility patents on a seed and cotton planter.

If Rep. Murray had continued to be a member of Congress he would no doubt have come to the floor of the House many more times to brag about African-American inventors and to acknowledge the major signifi-

cance of their inventions. He would have reported that by the year 1900 African-Americans had patented 357 inventions. And I am certain that he would have been especially moved to share with this body that by the early to mid-twentieth century, African-American inventors had obtained patents for innovations in countless industries, including medical, chemical, aviation, automotive, grocery, cosmetics and apparel. For example:

Garrett Morgan (1877–1963) invented the gas mask to protect fireman and other rescuers from breathing smoke and poisonous gas when entering dangerous fires and other situations and he was also awarded a patent for the three-way electric traffic signal.

Charles Drew (1904–1950) created a method to mass-produce blood plasma which led to the formation of blood banks to store plasma for victims of life-threatening emergencies. Unfortunately, he bled to death following an automobile accident which occurred in my native state of North Carolina and his injuries were too severe for the process he invented to be used to save his life.

Frederick McKinley Jones (1893–1961) was the first African-American member of the American Society of Refrigeration Engineers. He developed a means to refrigerate perishables being transported long distances.

Jack Johnson (1878–1946), best known as the great African-American boxer, received two patents, one for an improvement to the monkey wrench and the other for a theft-prevention device for vehicles. I suspect that my good friend and our colleague Rep. Darrell Issa might be surprised to learn that Jack Johnson, an African-American inventor, developed a device to prevent people from stealing cars long before Rep. ISSA got into the business.

Norbert Rillieux (1806–1894) invented a sugar processing evaporator that provided a safer, cheaper, and easier way of evaporating sugar cane juice and made the refinement of sugar more efficient. It is still used for the production of sugar, gelatin, condensed milk and glue, among other things.

Annie Minerva Turnbo Malone (1869–1957) was the first African-American beauty entrepreneur to manufacture a line of beauty products for African-American women. In the late 1800s and the early 1900s she manufactured and sold her products door-to-door. Mme. C.J. Walker, who is often credited with starting the African-American beauty business, was actually one of her sales agents.

Dr. Lloyd Augustus Hall (1894–1971), a pioneer in the area of food chemistry, developed preservative chemicals that were used to keep food fresh without sacrificing flavor. In the 1930s he introduced "flash-dried" salt crystals that revolutionized the meat packing industry.

Percy Lavon Julian (1899–1975) developed synthetic cortisone, which provided cheaper relief from rheumatoid arthritis. In 1954 he founded Julian Laboratories to research steroids and in 1961 he sold his company to Smith, Kline and French.

By the start of the 21st century and on into the present day, African-Americans have also been awarded patents in many other categories, including the technology and engineering fields. For instance:

Dr. Mark Dean holds more than twenty domestic patents and was a key developer of computer architecture for IBM.

Dr. George H. Simmons obtained a patent for creating a fiber-optic extension of an optic

local area network and another for designing a system to eliminate the unwanted pulses in a dial pulse stream on telephones.

Dr. James E. West is the well-regarded co-inventor of foil-electret transducers, which are the devices used to change sound into electrical signals and are used in items such as lapel microphones, hearing aids and portable tape recorders.

Lonnie Johnson invented the popular "Super Soaker" water gun.

I could go on ad infinitum about these and countless other examples of African-American ingenuity, but my time is limited. So I will instead encourage you to investigate for yourselves and learn more about the unique role that African-American inventors have played in the rich history of American inventiveness. For that purpose I direct you to an outstanding book called *The Inventive Spirit of African Americans* by Patricia Carter Sluby which details the many examples I have discussed, as well as many other outstanding innovations and patents by African-Americans. It is probably the most thorough and best researched and written history of African-American inventiveness available today. I also direct my colleagues to Kareem Abdul Jabbar's recent book written especially for children, entitled *What Color is My World?: The Lost History of African-American Inventors*. I commend these resources to my colleagues as we honor the exemplary achievements of African-Americans during Black History Month and throughout the year.

WE NEED TO MOVE TOWARD ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I watched the President on television the other night defending his energy policy, and he said, "The Republicans say drill, drill, drill, baby, but that's not the answer."

The fact is that the people of this country are suffering under severe energy prices that are rising at a rapid rate. Everything that we buy is affected by energy prices. I went to the store the other day to buy some apples and some tomatoes. We got three tomatoes for \$5, and I think we got four apples for \$5. Now, the reason those prices are going up so rapidly is because when you transport those across the country, or you use energy to produce those products, it costs more.

If you talk to the guys that drive these tractor-trailer units, they'll tell you how expensive it is to transport goods and services, clothes, food, and everything else that we buy. So we really need to move toward energy independence.

Now, the administration has had the ability to help other countries explore for oil. We sent I think \$2 billion or \$3 billion down to Brazil for deepwater drilling, but we cut back on the permits that we could get to drill in the Gulf of Mexico. Because of the environmental "nut cases," as I call them, the President has restricted the ability of the American energy sector to drill for